

R 111638Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY BERN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5707

S E C R E T BERN 000109

DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/EUR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/11/2019

TAGS: ASEC PTER SV

SUBJECT: BERN SEPO MARCH 2009

REF: STATE 13023

Classified By: RSO BRIAN C. MURPHY FOR REASON 1.5d

¶1. (SBU) The following are responses to the Security Environment Profile Questionnaire for political violence and terrorism for the U.S. Embassy in Bern, and are keyed to the reftel.

¶2. (SBU) Political Violence

¶I. (SBU) Demonstrations

¶IA. Are there any ethnic or religious communities in Bern prone to carrying out significant anti-American demonstrations?

Response: There are ethnic or religious communities within Switzerland that are capable of carrying out significant anti-American demonstrations.

i. Have there been anti-American demonstrations in the country within the last 12 months?

Response: Yes. There was one small Anti-American demonstration carried out by local left wing groups protesting U.S. role in the world economic crisis.

ii. Have anti-American demonstrations taken place near or in front of U.S. diplomatic facilities?

Response: Yes. The demonstration mentioned above was at the U.S. Embassy

iii. What is the average size of an anti-American demonstration?

Response: 45-55

iv. Are anti-American demonstrations usually triggered by U.S. Foreign policy initiatives, military actions, or by domestic issues?

Response: Anti-American demonstrations can be triggered by U.S foreign policy initiatives, military actions or domestic issues such as the economic crisis.

¶IB. Are demonstrations generally violent or peaceful?

Response: In general demonstrations are peaceful however the one mentioned above involved the throwing of rocks and ice and use of pyrotechnics (smoke bombs).

i. Have violent demonstrations resulted in damage to USG property or injuries to USG employees?

Response: There have been no reports of damage to USG property or injuries to USG employees during 2008.

ii. Have violent demonstrators ever penetrated your perimeter security line?

Response: No.

IC. Have any anti-government demonstrations taken place in the country within the last 12 months?

Response: In 2008 there have been anti-government demonstrations. Demonstrations have also targeted the United Nations, to include other Missions, the World Trade Organization, World Economic Forum, and other International Organizations within Geneva. .

i. Have any anti-government demonstrations taken place near or in front of U.S. diplomatic facilities?

Response: No.

ii. What is the average size of an anti-government demonstration?

Response: The anti-Swiss government demonstrations have been between 100 and 300 participants.

iii. Are demonstrations generally violent or peaceful?

Response: Demonstrations are normally peaceful, however there are occasions when private property is damaged through violence, vandalism, and graffiti.

iv. Have any demonstrations resulted in damage to USG property?

Response: No.

I3. (SBU) Macro Conflict Conditions:

IA. Is the host country engaged in an interstate or intrastate conflict?

Response: There are no known interstate or intrastate conflicts within Switzerland/

I4. (S/NF) Host Country Capabilities:

IA. Are law enforcement agencies professional and well trained?

Response: Federal and local (Cantons Vaud and Geneva) police authorities are trained and considered professional.

IB. Have they been trained by U.S. agencies?

Response: Host Government law enforcement authorities are not trained by the United States.

IC. Are law enforcement agencies confronted with serious, widespread corruption inside their agencies?

Response: The police and the legal system are considered to be trustworthy and not subject to widespread corruption. However the police report to be powerless against the professional criminal and blame the judicial system for tying their hands.

ID. Are the intelligence services professional and capable of deterring terrorist actions?

Response: Swiss Intelligence Services are considered to be professional, but staffed with only 300 people, their primary mission deals with counterintelligence issues.

IE. Have the intelligence services been cooperative with U.S. Embassy requests for information and support?

Response: Swiss intelligence Services have been generally cooperative in handling requests for information and support but Swiss privacy laws are very strict and these laws definitely affect the ease of gaining information.

IF. Assuming there have been significant terrorist threats in recent years, have host country security services been able to score any major anti-terrorism successes?

Response: On February 28 2007, the 7 individuals who were originally arrested by Swiss authorities for providing logistical support for the Al-Qaeda terror network were all acquitted in Swiss Federal court. There is currently no law in Switzerland prohibiting membership in Al-Qaeda.

Swiss authorities cooperated with Italian officials in arresting a Tunisian national for operating websites that supported extremist Islamic groups. On June 21 2007, this individual was sentenced to two years in prison (but with 18 months suspended sentence).

On June 20 2007, a Belgium female and her Tunisian husband - who held a Swiss residency permit - received a light suspended sentence for inciting hatred and jihad on the internet. Shortly thereafter, they moved to Belgium without serving their sentences.

In 2007, Swiss Parliament began the ratification process of the Operative Working Agreement (OWA), which is supposed to regulate cooperation for legal assistance between the US and Switzerland in prosecuting terrorists. The OWA, which was signed by law enforcement representatives of Switzerland and the US in July 2006, has its origins in cooperative efforts between Switzerland and the US since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

In July 2007, the Algerian, who was suspected of plotting an attack on an Israeli airliner in Switzerland a year earlier, was deported back to Algeria.

I.G. Has host country been responsive to U.S. Embassy requests for protective security?

Response: The host country has been generally responsive to requests for protective security. Several requests for support have been declined and or are met with the very minimum support level. The Swiss will not provide the details of their support prior to the event, but assure the Mission that it will be at the appropriate level. Several cabinet members that receive U.S. security details are not granted security details in Switzerland. Including the U.S. Trade Representative and the National Security Advisor.

I.H. How does the Embassy assess the overall security at major airports in the country.

Response: Overall security at Geneva's airport is considered excellent.

I.I. How effective are customs and immigration control agencies?

Response: Swiss customs and immigration are somewhat effective. The Swiss border guards are the armed service of the federal guards that work at 91 fixed locations and in 35 mobile units along Switzerland's 1,881 kilometers of border. With the Swiss government coming to an agreement with the EU to participate in the Schengen visa program, the fixed border locations are scheduled to be removed.

I.J. How effective are border patrol forces?

Response: Swiss border patrol forces are somewhat effective, but are being eliminated in 2009.

I.S. (S) Indigenous Terrorism:

I.I. (S) Anti-American Terrorist Groups

I.A. Are there indigenous, anti-American terrorist groups in-country?

Response: No.

I.B. Have groups carried out lethal anti-American attacks within the last 12 months?

Response: No.

I.C. Were there any other anti-American attacks?

Response: No.

ID. Have groups attacked U.S. Diplomatic targets?

Response: No.

IE. Have groups attacked U.S. business, U.S. Military, or U.S. related targets?

Response: No.

IF. Have groups limited their attacks to specific regions or do they operate country-wide?

Response: Not applicable.

IG. If attacks are limited to regions, are there any U.S. diplomatic facilities located in these regions?

Response: Not applicable.

II. (S) Other Indigenous Terrorist Groups

IA. Are there other indigenous terrorist groups (not anti-American) in-country?

Response: No.

IB. Have groups carried out attacks in the capital or in areas where U.S. diplomatic facilities are located?

Response: No.

IC. Were attacks lethal and/or indiscriminate?

Response: Not applicable.

ID. Have any Americans been killed or injured in these attacks?

Response: Not applicable.

IE. (S) Transnational Terrorism

II. (S) Transnational Terrorist Indictors:

IA. Are there any foreign terrorist groups that have a presence in-country?

(S) Response:

Al-Qa'da associates (Owaiss network)

Al-Gama'at al-Islamiya (IG)

Ansa al Islam (AAI)

Libyan Islamic fighting group

Konga Eel

Hizballah

Asbat al-Ansar

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

Liberation Tigers Talil Elan (LTTE)

Popular Movement of Kosovo

Hamas

Islamic Salvation Front (Algeria) (FIS)

Armed Group of Algeria (GIA)

Al-Nahda variant en-Nahda

Front Islamique Tunisiens (FIT)

Mujahedin e-Khalq (MEK) aka: People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI) and Mujahedine - Khalq

Active Islamic Youth Organization

National Liberation Army of Columbia

Revolutionary Armed Force of Colombia (FARC)

IB. How does post assess this presence? Is it an operational cell? Financial cell? support cell? Propaganda cell?

Response: It is assessed that these groups provide logistical and financial support and are involved in propaganda and facilitation activity.

IC. Is the host government sympathetic to these groups?

Response: The host government is not sympathetic to these groups, but do not take aggressive action as compared to U.S. law enforcement authorities.

ID. Are there suspect non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the country that have a relationship with any of these groups?

Response:

Islamic Relief Organization,
Association de Secours Palestinien,
Ligue des Mussulams de Suisse.

IE. Are there any ethnic or religious communities in-country that are sympathetic to these groups?

Response: There are a small number of individuals (Libyan, Tunisian, Bosnian, Moroccan, Palestinian, Algerian, Somali, Sudanese) and some Muslims that are sympathetic to these groups.

IF. How does post assess the level, intent, and scope of hostile intelligence services (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Serbia, Sudan, etc.) in-country relative to potential anti-American terrorist acts?

Response: No information available.

IG. How does post assess the availability of weapons and explosives in-country or from nearby countries for hostile terrorist elements?

Response: There is insufficient information available to make a determination as to whether groups or organizations maintain or have access to explosives in country.

CARTER